

REMARKS

Claim 20 has been amended to specify that the second card recognition unit senses the encoded imprint value of each card after the card has been drawn from the deck of cards and before further cards are drawn from the deck, and that the comparison unit provides an indication in the event that the imprint value sensed by the second card recognition unit does not match the imprint value that was sensed by the first card recognition unit as the card was drawn from the deck. Amendment of claim 20 is supported by at least paragraphs [108] and [109] of the specification as published (the paragraphs starting at page 20, lines 30 and 36 of the English translation of the international application as filed April 16, 2004).

All claims stand rejected under 35 USC 102 or 35 USC 103, relying on McCrae as the primary reference.

An implementation of the present claimed subject matter, as defined in claim 1, provides equipment where playing cards have their value recognized and registered by a first card recognition unit as they are moved face down and out of a card shoe, and also by a second card recognition unit when they are placed on the gaming table. The respective signals are compared to identify if the same value playing card has been detected, and if so an appropriate signal is sent to the computer. If however the same card has not been detected a rules violation signal is sent to the computer. A further card is only then drawn if the compared values match. This means that the game can be stopped at any time during the game if the same card is not detected by both units, before an error occurs in the playing of the game.

The present claimed subject matter therefore provides a system where multiple readings of a card's value are taken and compared prior to further cards being dealt.

McCrea discloses apparatus in which the value of a card drawn from the card shoe is recognized and the information is stored (col. 6, lines 37-58). Further cards are then drawn from the card shoe and dealt to the players by the dealer, the value of each card

being recognized and the relevant information stored. The determined values are used to decide winnings/losses in particular rounds or over several rounds of play.

Referring to col. 14, line 12 of McCrae, a second camera 1430 is provided in the card shoe for recognizing the values of the cards as they are returned to the shoe after a hand is played.

Therefore where there is a mismatch between the first and second readings of a card, this mismatch will not be detected until the end of a hand of play. This system will therefore only operate successfully if the value of the card is always correctly recognized by both card recognition systems.

In practice, recognition systems will occasionally produce errors, which may be misrecognizing a card, not recognizing a card relative to its image library, or missing a card, i.e. not reacting to a drawn card. If any of these errors occur in the system disclosed by McCrae, this could affect the outcome of the game and hence the calculation of winnings or losses. The automatic control of the game will therefore crash.

Errors in recognition systems do occur as is well known by specialists working in this field. The most reliable card recognition systems presently available in the market have a reliability of 99.99%. This means that on average one of every 10,000 cards will be recognized incorrectly, not recognized or missed. In an intense game 10,000 cards can be dealt at a table within about five to six hours, meaning that the McCrae system will crash every five to six hours under busy conditions. This system therefore does not provide for automatic play and winnings calculation for a game in a secure environment.

The arrangement of Uhland similarly fails to disclose taking multiple card readings after each card is drawn, and will therefore also suffer from similar errors in card recognition.

Applicant submits that the subject matter of claim 20, as currently amended, is not disclosed or suggested by McCrae and Uhland, whether taken singly or in combination.

Therefore, claim 20 is patentable and it follows that the dependent claims 21-37 also are patentable.

Respectfully submitted,

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